DEMOCRATIC
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STRIKE BAN

"Taff Vale" Case in West Germany

Workers' right to strike was declared virtually illegal in West Germany on October 31st, by a court decision making trade unions liable to pay millions of marks in "damages" to employers.

The Federal Supreme Labour Court ruled that the Engineers' Union, most powerful union in West Germany, was liable for the profits lost by engineering employers in the course of a five-month strike in Schleswig-Holstein in 1956—57. Employers' spokesmen have estimated the losses at about 300 million marks (over £ 25 million).

"This court decision is a serious threat to the right to strike" a spokesman of the Social Democratic Party declared. The leading West German newspaper "Die Welt" commented on November 3rd that the court decision would, in particular, make political strikes impossible.

Political observers pointed out the parallel between the West German court ruling and the "Taff Vale decision" in Britain in 1901.

In this case a railway company won damages of £ 20,000 from the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants for losses sustained during a strike. This action crippled the British unions, forced them into political activity, and was a large factor in the formation of the Labour Party as it exists today. Working class pressure forced the British Government to pass legislation reversing the Taff Vale decision in 1906.

An Open Letter To Lord Attlee

Dear Lord Attlee,

On August 2nd 1945 you put your signature to the Potsdam Agreement defining the principles of allied policy towards defeated Germany.

Paragraph 8 of this agreement reads as follows:

"The judicial system will be reorganised in accordance with the principles of democracy, of justice under law, and of equal rights for all citizens."

Paragraph 6 of the agreement states:

"All members of the Nazi party who have been more than nominal participants in its activities ... shall be removed from public and semi-public office ..."

I should like to draw your attention to the way in which these paragraphs of this solemn international agreement, bearing your signature, have been interpreted in one small but vital sector of public life in the West German Federal Republic. Today, only 13 years after the signature of the Potsdam Agreement, a very large proportion of the key posts in the judicial system are once again occupied by judges and public prosecutors who served in similar positions under Hitler.

Investigations completed to date show that more than 600 of the judges and prosecuting attorneys now active in West Germany occupied similar posts in Nazi "Special Courts" and "People's Courts". These men were not concerned with the normal day-to-day legal work of sitting in judgment on burglars, wife-beaters, and traffic offenders; such work may

proceed in a fascist dictatorship in much the same way as in any other state. But these men formed the backbone of the Nazi system of repression: they were the men who passed the death sentences on the Social Democrats, Communists, Jews, Poles, Czechs, Frenchmen and others who had dared to defy the Hitlerite regime.

The question of the re-employment in the West German judicial service of men of this type was raised in the House of Commons by Labour M.P.s in July 1957, and in March 1958. The questions asked, and the answers given by Government spokesmen are reprinted in this issue of GERMAN REPORT. As you will see, the Government spokesman promised that investigations were being made.

If the "investigations" continue at the present snail's pace, they will never be completed. That is why I am addressing myself personally to you with the request that you use your influence, in any manner open to you, to urge the British Government to make the strongest possible representations. As one of the signatories to the Potsdam Agreement, which was designed to prevent just such a thing happening, you will, I am sure, feel a personal interest in this question.

Yours sincerely,

John Peet.

WEST GERMANY'S HANGING JUDGES

600 Nazi Jurists Back in Office

At least 600 of Hitler's judges and public prosecutors hold high office in the judicial system in West Germany, according to still incomplete investigations conducted by the Committee for German Unity in Berlin.

These are today judges and public prosecutors at courts in all parts of West Germany. During the nazi period they served in similar positions in nazi "Special Courts", "People's Courts" and in military courts, both in Germany and in the occupied countries of Europe. The detailed lists of these hanging judges, who were responsible for thousands of executions of opponents of German fascism, have been drawn up by the Committee for German Unity exclusively on the basis of documents, mainly court files, in the possession of the authorities of the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

A spokesman of the Government of the German Democratic Republic has offered to make these original nazi files available for inspection by the British Government or by other interested parties.

Here are just a few of the details of the crimes committed by these nazi jurists.

Dr Muhs, today Senior Judge of the Provincial Court at Hamm. During the Second World War he was Judge in the nazi "Special Court" in occupied Poland. He specialised in passing death sentences on Poles who gave asylum to Jewish children to save them from death in the nazi gas chambers. The Polish worker Wladislaw Tyczynski of Radom, hid a small Jewish boy. Judge Muhs sentenced him to death on April 4th 1944. The boy was gassed. The Pole Bazyli Antoniak in Radom gave asylum to a seven-year old and a six-year-old Jewish girl. Judge Muhs sentenced him to death, and the girls were gassed.

Dr Werner Rohde, today Government Counsellor in the Ministry of Justice of Schleswig-Holstein. During the Second World War he was public prosecutor in the nazi "Special Court" in Prague, occupied Czechoslovakia. He drew up the charges and led the prosecution in cases which led to the execution of at least 28 Czech anti-nazis. Here are just a few of them: Anna Matyasovsky and Wenzel Tlusty, sentenced to death on April 21st 1944 for giving asylum to resistance fighters sought by the Gestapo; Bozena Michal and Anton Hotovec, sentenced to death on November 22nd 1944 for hiding a former member of the Czechoslovak Army. In September 1958, in West Germany, Dr Rhode was responsible for the investigations into the case of SS-General Reinefarth, the butcher of Warsaw who was charged with war crimes. Dr Rhode declared that there was no evidence for proceeding with the case.

Dr Breustedt, today public prosecutor in Giessen. During the Second World War he was Judge of the nazi "Special Court" at Ciechanow, occupied Poland. On January 11th 1943 he sentenced the Polish domestic worker Rosalie Kulesa to death for hitting a German woman in the face with a handbag. Evidence was given that during the three days following the blow, the German woman "felt that her cheek was swollen".

Dr Kohlstadt, today judge in Koblenz. During the Second World War he was Judge in the nazi "Special Court" in Prague, occupied Czechoslovakia. On July 22nd 1943 he passed sentence of death on the Czech Josef Maly for providing a Jew with forged identity papers with the aim of saving his life. The Jew, Franz Thein, was also executed.

Dr Dannegger, today Senior Judge in Wiedenbrueck. During the Second World War he was Judge at the nazi "Special Court" in Prague, occupied Czechoslovakia. He sentenced at least ten Czech citizens to death for hiding or supporting resistance fighters and escaped allied POWs. On December 6th 1944 he passed sentence of death on Professor Karl Kratina, a Catholic priest for "sabotage committed by making malicious remarks". Evidence was given that the priest had said: "Formerly robbers used to be hung on the cross: today crosses are hung on the robbers' chests".

Dr Ludwig, today public prosecutor in Dusseldorf. During the Second World War he was Senior Public Prosecutor at the nazi "Special Court" in Prague, occupied Czechoslovakia. He led the prosecution in the case of the Catholic priest Karl Kratina described above.

Dr Rehder-Knospel, today public prosecutor in Mannheim. During the Second World War he was public Prosecutor at the nazi "Special Court" in Prague, occupied Czechoslovakia, and assisted in the prosecution of the Catholic priest Karl Kratina described above.

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Special attention should be paid to the case of Dr Ernst Kanter, who today holds the key position of Presiding Judge in the Third Senate of the West German Supreme Court. This is the section of the supreme court which deals with political cases, in the main cases of Communists, Social Democrats, trade unionists and others who have been active in endeavours to bring about the peaceful reunification of Germany.

During the Second World War Dr Kanter was a Judge-General of the nazi Wehrmacht, and Chief Justice in nazi-occupied Denmark. 103 Danish resistance fighters were sentenced to death and executed by nazi courts under Kanter's jurisdiction.

The appointment of Dr Kanter to a very responsible post in the West German judicial apparatus has been sharply criticised in Denmark. The newspaper "Aftenposten", organ of the Social Democratic Party in Silkeborg, stated on October 29th: "If the Danish people are to have any confidence in their NATO partner to the south, then this partner (West Germany, ed.) must take quite a different attitude to those responsible for nazi crimes.

"We must reject the argument that the attacks against Kanter are unjustified because newspapers in the German Democratic Republic have made the same charges. It is not ordinary political decency to stamp as 'Communist' everything which happens to to be identical with something which happens to have been published in a Communist newspaper... If Ernst Kanter continues to occupy the chair of Senate President in the West German Supreme Court, this will only strengthen general scepticism in Denmark ... about developments in the German Federal Republic."

British M.P.s Raise Question of Nazi Judges

Mr. S. Silverman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that, contrary to the Potsdam Agreements, about 200 persons are now employed either as judges or public prosecutors who were personally concerned as judges in the infliction of death and other heavy sentences for offences against the Nuremberg and other Nazi laws; what consultations he has had about this matter with the other parties to the Potsdam Agreements; and what representations concerning it he has made or will make to the German Federal Government.

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd: I am aware that allegations of this nature have been made recently, apparently originating in East Germany. I am informed that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany have already initiated an investigation into these allegations. In the circumstances I think it would be inappropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

Mr. Silverman: I thank the right hon. and learned Gentleman for that answer, and I do not expect him to comment further while the investigation is proceeding, but will he at any rate assure the House that he will keep the matter in mind and make sure that the investigation is not delayed, and report to the House when he has the result of it?

Mr. Lloyd: The fact is that since 5th May, 1955, the appointment of judges is a matter falling within the full jurisdiction of the Federal German Government and the Governments of the German Länder. Nevertheless, I can assure the hon. Member that we retain an interest in this matter and that we shall follow it up.

Mr. Silverman: I fully appreciate that since the date mentioned by the right hon. and learned Gentleman these matters fall to be decided by the sovereign authority which we have accorded to West Germany, but does he nevertheless agree that that does not enable us to abdicate any of our responsibilities under the Agreements we made before that?

Mr. Lloyd: As I said, this is a matter in which we retain an interest.

"Hansard" July 10th 1957

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Mr. Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that, since 10th July, 1957, the German Federal Government has been investigating allegations that, contrary to the Potsdam Agreements, about 200 persons are now employed either as judges or public prosecutors who were personally concerned as judges in the infliction of death and other heavy sentences for offences against Nazi laws; what recent consultations he has had about this matter with the other parties to the Potsdam Agreements; what representation he has made to the German Federal Government; what is the reason for this continued delay before the publication of the Federal German Government's report on their investigations; and when he hopes to make a statement to the House of Commons.

Mr. Ian Harvey: Yes, Sir. This is a matter for the German Federal and Land Governments. Under any democratic system which has concern for rights and reputations of individuals, an investigation of this kind inevitably takes time and my right hon. and learned Friend will not be in a position to make a statement until the investigation has been completed.

Mr. Lewis: That was the answer we had last July. Cannot the hon. Gentleman suggest to the Bonn Government that they should give him at least an information about the matter before Her Majesty's present Government leave office in two years? The way we are going on, I shall be wearing a beard before I receive an answer on the subject.

Mr. Harvey: An interim reply would not be of very great value, but we are prepared to look into the matter further.

Mr. S. Silverman: Does the hon. Member remember that I asked a question about this of his right hon. and learned Friend as long ago as the early part of last July, that is to say, some eight or nine months ago? Does he not further realise that a great many facts are known about it, that it should not be very difficult to find out how many of these people are occupying these posts, and that if he leaves it too long a vested interest will be created with which it will be very hard afterwards to interfere? Does not the hon. Member think, however much we may have forgotten in the past twelve years the events which took place beforehand, these people are not fit to be associated at least with the administration of justice? Will not the Government do something about the matter?

Mr. Harvey: I appreciate and sympathise with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member, but they do not have very much bearing on this position, because we have to elucidate the facts as opposed to allegations, and I have already told the hon. Member for West Ham, North (Mr. Lewis) that we will look into the matter further.

Mr. J. Hynd: The Minister has not referred to the Potsdam Agreements mentioned in the Question. Can he make it clear whether the terms of the Potsdam Agreements are recognised as accepted by all parties?

Mr. Harvey: That is inherent in the reply I have given. We have a continuing interest, or otherwise we would not be in a position to make the inquiries I have indicated.

"Hansard" March 10th 1958

We Understand Your Feelings

Berlin Comment on Heuss Visit

The people of the German Democratic Republic understand the cool reception given to West German President Theodor Heuss when he visited Britain, the Foreign Ministry of Democratic Germany stated in an official declaration on October 28th. Here is the text of the statement:

"West German President Heuss' state visit to England was a fiasco because he was regarded, not as the representative of a new Germany, but as camouflage for those people who have prevented real change in West Germany since 1945.

"The government of the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly called upon the European peoples and their governments to put an end to those developments in West Germany which are a threat to peace. It has presented many proposals for the prevention of atomic armament in West Germany and for normalising the position in Germany, but these have been rejected by the West German government, which was supported in this by the attitude of the government of the United Kingdom. The British Government has thus made itself partly responsible for the revival of those forces in West Germany which are rejected by the people of Great Britain.

"The working people of the German Democratic Republic understand the public reaction in Great Britain.

NO TOMATOES?

"London, Oct 23 ... West German newspapers have complained of Britons' coldness to President Heuss. 'They are too thin skinned' one official asserted. 'He was jolly lucky not to have anything thrown at him. Englishmen aren't angry about our dead or our bombed cities' the official continued, 'but we can't forget Belsen and Dachau and the corpses being shoved into furnaces'."

"New York Times" (Amsterdam Edition) October 25th

The efforts of the West German monopolists to spread their power, and their preparations for an atomic war produce a similar reaction here. But they do not understand why the earnest efforts for peace made by the government of the German Democratic Republic receive no support from the British Government.

"The British Government encourages plans for the creation of a NATO Germany, which would mean extension of the forces in power in West Germany over all Germany, and certain war. The British people's healthy reaction to the Heuss visit shows that they recognise the dangers of this policy and are seriously disturbed by it.

"If the proposals of the German Democratic Republic — which represents peaceful and democratic development in Germany — for a peace treaty with Germany and for the creation of an atom-free zone in Middle Europe were carried out, this would extinguish a dangerous spark which aggressive imperialist forces in West Germany are trying to kindle. It should be recognised in Great Britain that support of these proposals would be the best way to assure peace and co-operation between the German and the British people."

BRITISH PRESS ON HEUSS

Here are two comments from the British press on the occasion of the states visit paid to Britain by Theodor Heuss, President of the West German Federal Republic:

"Judging by the display of flags on the Fleet-street buildings... the people who live and work there are not particularly impressed with the state visit of Theodor Heuss... The ageing professor has successfully been sold to an amiable but significantly silent British public as a benign and scholarly man. Heuss has been marketed over here as a gentle, learned Santa Claus utterly removed from the Krupps, the Thyssens, the Schachts and all the other industrialists and scientists, technicians and students without whose enthusiastic co-operation World War Two would never have been possible.

"The President is in fact a skilful apologist for the German people... The blazing idiocy of some fool in the Foreign Office, compounded by some equivalent lackey in the (West) German Embassy must have advised that the bombing of Coventry and the deaths of over 1,300 civilians might be ameliorated by a cheque from President Heuss for £5000. We want no apologetic tips on our national tombs. In the words of Winston Churchill: 'What kind of people do they think we are?'."

"Daily Mirror", October 22nd.

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"There will be mixed feelings about the state visit of the (West) German President... A great blot remains — not a hangover from the past, but a present failure made all the more scandalous by Germany's prosperity... The disgrace is this. The new (West) Germany can find pensions on a generous scale for former officials of the Third Reich. It does not find the money nearly so willingly for the victims of the nazis. Only this month a Cologne court dismissed a claim for compensation with a cynical casuistry worthy of Hitler... (West Germany) cannot yet be said to have regained fully her right to self-respect."

"News Chronicle", October 20th.

Pacifist Journalists Jailed

West Berlin police arrested six journalists on October 30th, and charged them with "actions calculated to undermine the constitution of the (West) German Federal Republic". The men arrested were the entire editorial staff of "SOS", a pacifist fortnightly published in West Berlin, which has in the past spoken out plainly against nuclear weapons, and in favour of negotiations between East and West Germany.

ON TOUR WITH PARLIAMENT CANDIDATE

By Helge Larsen, Berlin Correspondent of "Land og Folk", Denmark

According to most reports in the western press the general elections to be held in the German Democratic Republic on November 16th are in no way "free" elections; these elections are generally described as "show elections", and it is generally assumed that the candidates are hand-picked by the Socialist Unity Party.

I personally believe, after spending a day with one of the candidates, that the method of election in the German Democratic Republic makes it easier for the voters to prevent the election of unacceptable candidates than it is in some "democratic" countries. But readers should judge for themselves.

Here, first of all, is the background. On November 16th voters will go to the polls to elect 400 members for the People's Chamber, the parliament of the Democratic Republic. The five parties: the Socialist Unity Party, the Christian Democrats, the Liberal Democrats, the National Democrats, the Democratic Peasants, together with various other bodies such as the trade unions, draw up a coalition list of candidates, the candidates of the National Front. This coalition slate is the result of discussions between the various parties and organisations. After this the candidates have to present themselves to their constituents, and this does not just mean that they have to hold a speech or two; they have to convince the voters that they really represent their interests.

The voters give their candidates all sorts of commissions: we need a new children's playground; this or that institution is too bureaucratic; and so on. If the voters are dissatisfied with the candidate because of his past record or his work in his past period of office, then the voters' meeting can recommend to the local organisation of the National Front that the candidate should be rejected and replaced by a better one.

A few days ago, I attended one of these election meetings in one of the big industrial centres of the Democractic Republic. Frankly, I was disappointed, since there was no real discussion on any of the subjects touched on. A few days later I happened to be talking to a friend of mine, Walter Tille, leading trade union official, and a candidate in the elections. I asked him whether the workers were so satisfied that they had nothing to say, or whether they were perhaps frightened to express their opinion.

"Come along with me to one of my next meetings on the building site, and you will hear what the workers have to say" he told me.

At six in the morning we set off from Berlin: at eight we reached the building site, part of the big new civil aircraft factory at Dresden: and at nine that evening the "election meeting" was over.

First of all we visited some young technicians, and asked them how things were. Going fairly well on the whole, they said, but there was a lot of trouble with housing. And then this business about proposals for improvement in modes of work: we keep on making proposals, but the building site managers don't seem to be interested. Why ask us to make proposals if nobody looks at them?

Then we went on to a group of building workers. Here there were plenty of questions. We are doing all right on the whole, but why do the workers in the plane factory get higher rates of pay than we do? And why have they got a better canteen? The second point is soon cleared up: it is naturally easier to furnish a fine canteen for a factory, where it is permanent, than on a building site where it is going to be torn down when the work is finished.

Shortly before midday we moved on to a team, or brigade, doing concreting. Here there was so much to be discussed that the argument went on right through the dinner-break and beyond. One of the men was classified in a wage-group which he felt was too low. Tille agreed, and called for the foreman, who admitted that an error had been made and promised to straighten things out: "That is not the main point. Our work is difficult and complicated, but we never know what our pay is going to be until we actually get our pay packets. Then we generally have to have a discussion before we can get the full pay that we feel we have earned. Then we get it, but why these eternal discussions?"

The interesting point for me in these discussions was that the workers, who spoke up very openly in the argument which followed, were not opposed to the government, or opposed to socialism, but were annoyed about what they felt to be various injustices at their place of work.

"This is natural" said Tille. "This is the most important thing for us. Your place of work, your housing, all that forms part of the German Democratic Republic, and all these things have to be put in order before you can feel full confidence in our government. I can see that a whole series of laws and regulations have not been applied fully on this building site, and it is part of my work, and part of the election preparations to see that these things are put right."

The day was by no means over yet. The building engineer in charge of this sector soon appeared, and started complaining that work had been held up for more than half an hour.

"That's right" said Tille, "and if necessary we would have held up the work for even longer. Why haven't you got a sensible method of wage calculation, so that the workers don't get annoyed every week? Why have you not installed conveyor belts which would make the work easier and increase pay? That's your responsibility."

The young man, who had just finished his studies, and obviously had not yet found the best way to deal with his work, was soon on the defensive, and he went away looking very thoughtful.

The discussions continued through the afternoon, and then we visited a little pub, the only place where you could get a drink in the vicinity of the wooden barracks where the building workers were living. It was a dirty little room, with space for about 20 people, and obviously had not been swept out for days. "We used to have a decent state-owned cafe here, but it was closed because it wasn't making a profit" said one of the workers.

At 5 o'clock the election meeting proper began. Walter Tille held a very short speech. He had noted that the workers on the building site were very dissatisfied, he said. On the whole this dissatisfaction was justified. Now you have a chance to tell me what you do not like, and how it could be improved. That is what we are here for today.

The manager of the building site began to make excuses, but then the

workers started to make their complaints, the complaints which I have mentioned above, and a number of others: for instance there was very little entertainment; when they went back to their barracks at the end of the day's work the rooms were cold, and they had to "organise" wood and coal themselves.

When a whole list of complaints and suggestions had been drawn up, Walter Tille summed up his suggestions. In the next five days arrangements should be made to obtain wood and coal and get the rooms heated. The building site manager interrupted to say that it would be fixed by the next day (and it was fixed). In the course of the next ten days a cafe should be opened, in which the workers could sit in the evenings, drink their beer and have something to eat, and entertainment on the site should be organised. After two weeks, the management should submit hard and fast plans for the other things to be done. And if this does not work out properly, then we shall hold another meeting, even if it does mean that we lose a few working hours.

After the meeting had officially ended, the workers did not want to leave, they were so busy making plans for the new cafe. But the important thing was not so much the cafe: the important thing was that they had gained confidence both in their representative and in their own ability. In future they will not be shy of telling management if something is not in order.

The next day we visited a number of other building sites at the Technical College in Dresden. Here again there was lively discussion: the main theme was the bad planning on the site — we build a little bit here, then a little bit there, then the plans are altered, then they are re-altered. Tille asked the workers if they did not protest. Yes, of course, said the workers, but then we get put off with promises. We never see the people who make the plans.

Tille took the complaints very seriously, and in the subsequet election meeting he promised the workers that in the very near future he would organise a meeting in the same hall at which the "people who make the plans", the architects and the representatives of the State Secretariat for Universities would be in attendance to find out what the workers thought, and answer their questions and criticisms.

The two days which I spent with candidate Walter Tille on the building sites taught me a lot. The workers have their problems: not everything runs as it should, but things are improving, and will improve even more through this sort of close cooperation between the workers and their parliamentary representatives. I can well imagine that many workers in capitalist countries would be glad if their parliamentary representatives would take as much interest in their problems as is shown by Walter Tille and the other candidates for election to the People's Chamber. *(Editor's note: Walter Tille, the candidate whose work is described in this article, is chairman of the building workers' union. He is 52, a bricklayer by profession, and before Hitler came to power he was active in the Social Democratic Party. During the nazi period he was active in the anti-nazi underground, and went through the mill of emigration and imprisonment. After the war he helped to introduce progressive new building methods in the Democratic Republic, and has been decorated with the National Prize and as an activist.)*

FIVE QUESTIONS ON GERMAN UNITY PROBLEMS

Five basic questions on ways and means to reunite Germany were posed at a meeting in Berlin on October 19th by Professor Walter Hagemann, prominent member of Adenauer's Christian Democratic Party in West Germany.

Professor Hagemann, who has been in great difficulties with the leadership of his party because of his opposition to its policy of atomic armament, put the questions at a meeting of the National Council of the National Front, which he attended as guest. The questions were answered by Walter Ulbricht, Deputy Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic. The questions and answers are given in slightly condensed form below:

Professor Hagemann: *"Is the Government of the German Democratic Republic serious in proposing negotiations between the two German states?"*

Walter Ulbricht: "We have announced our readiness to negotiate. We have laid down no preliminary conditions for negotiations, but it is public knowledge that in case of negotiations we shall raise first and foremost questions affecting the maintenance of peace." Walter Ulbricht stressed that this included the question of arming the West German Wehrmacht with atomic weapons.

"We can state now that we shall not carry on these negotiations on a basis of secret diplomacy, but that we shall consult with the population on what propcsals we should make. The important thing is that a real atmosphere of negotiation should be created."

Professor Hagemann: *"It has been claimed that the Soviet Union and the Government of the German Democratic Republic wish the separate signature of a peace treaty by the two German states, as a means of stressing on the international level the independence of the German Democratic Republic. What is the position?"*

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Walter Ulbricht: "The answer to this question is very simple. We want one peace treaty, and not two peace treaties. For this reason we have proposed that the representatives of the two German governments should come together to reach agreement on the contents of this one peace treaty. We believe that when a peace treaty is drafted, it will have to be implemented in the whole of Germany. In practical terms the establishment of such a commission and the cooperation in the drafting of a peace treaty will by-and-large be equivalent with the establishment of a confederation."

Professor Hagemann: *"When we get to the stage of negotiations, what questions does the Government of the German Democratic Republic regard as particularly urgent, and which questions might be the first to be discussed?"*

Walter Ulbricht: "The main problem is to free people in Germany of the fear of atomic death. On July 7th 1956 the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party proposed to the West German Social Democratic Party the following joint programme: Agreement on the limitation of armed forces; agreement by both German states to reject the stationing of nuclear weapons on German territory and the arming of German troops with atomic weapons; agreement on a zone of limited armaments and an atom-free zone. Naturally we propose the withdrawal of foreign troops from Germany and from all European states.

"These are the themes which could be dealt with in the first stage of the negotiations. When negotiations get going on these problems we could naturally deal with many other questions. . We could deal with questions of economic relations, currency, transport, and all sorts of other problems. But the first step will have to be to sit down together round a table as partners with equal rights and the first question must be the liberation of the people from the threat of atomic death.

"Without the creation of an atom-free zone, and without disarmament it is impossible to conceive German reunification. Reunification cannot be achieved under the threat of Mr Dulles' atom bomb or General Heusinger's atom bomb."

Professor Hagemann: *"My fourth question is this: is a confederation thought of as a step towards reunification, or as a final solution of the problem?"*

Walter Ulbricht: "I can reveal that the idea of a confederation was the result of a talk between a well-known member of the West German Government and our representatives. In the course of this talk there was discussion of the means to be used to achieve reunification, and the gentleman in question unofficially suggested confederation... This Christian Democratic Minister probably expected that the representative of the German Democratic Republic would reject the idea of confederation. I am disclosing this here so that nobody should think that the confederation idea is a real 'Marxist-Lenist' proposal. Since we genuinely desire reunification, we defined the idea more precisely: since the West German Government does not desire reunification, it turned down the idea as soon as it was obvious that we favoured it.

"Confederation is the only practical, peaceful method of reunification. We realise that reunification cannot be achieved by a sudden decree emanating from any quarter: it must be a process, and not only a process of negotiation, but also a process of development in which the people will have to play a direct part."

Professor Hagemann: *"If Bonn cannot at present make up its mind to negotiate with the German Democratic Republic, would it be useful for a consultative body of influential personalities to start negotiations, and thereby prepare the way for official talks?"*

Walter Ulbricht: "I understand this question as meaning personalities independent of the Bonn Government. We believe that such a body is possible: but it would have to be composed of personalities from both parts of Germany who really represent something. Such a body could be really useful if its West German members included leading personalities from the Social Democratic Party, the trade unions, the intelligentsia and the youth organisations. The question is whether the leadership of the Social Democratic Party is ready to delegate members for such a body. It would be an important task to convince the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions that they should send delegates. The formation of such a body could then lead to positive results..."

RECOGNITION FOR NEW AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The German Democratic Republic has announced its recognition of the new Republic of Guinea, former French colony in West Africa. The act of recognition was announced in a letter from President Wilhelm Pieck of the Democratic Republic, addressed to President Sekou Toure of Guinea.

The letter was handed over to the President of Guinea in his capital, Conakri, by a special delegation from Democratic Germany. The delegation is now engaged in negotiations in Conakri on the establishment of trade and cultural relations between the two states.

Democratic Germany's recognition of the new African republic followed receipt of a letter from President Sekou Toure to Wilhelm Pieck announcing its formation as an independent state.

Irak Representative for Berlin

The new Republic of Irak will establish a permanent trade mission in Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic, and Democratic Germany will have a permanent mission in Bagdad under the terms of an agreement signed in the Iraki capital on October 26th.

Signing the agreement, Herr Gerhard Weiss, Deputy Foreign Trade Minister of Democratic Germany, stated that the recent revolution in Irak had swept away the unnatural barriers which had separated the two states in recent years.

The trade agreement between the two states provides for the supply of large quantities of machinery to Irak, and big shipments of dates, cotton, tobacco and other agricultural products to the German Democratic Republic.

More Cod Liver Oil?

Trade between Iceland and the German Democratic Republic is scheduled to increase by one third next year, under the terms of a new trade agreement just signed between representatives of the two countries.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

In past years we often found cause to get into a fight with the Berlin or the West German correspondents of various British and American newspapers because of the screaming inaccuracy of their reporting on events in the German Democratic Republic.

There were the correspondents who regularly reported that Christmas had been banned in Democratic Germany (although Christmas holds full traditional sway here), the people who saw starving refugees tumbling into West Berlin refugee camps "pleading for a slice of bread" (although bread was, and is, cheaper in the East than the West); and even one notable British newspaper writer who saw buildings in East Berlin "swathed in the green-white banner of the German Democratic Republic" (although the flag is, and always has been, black-red-gold).

I must freely confess that in matters of detail such as this, most western newspaper correspondents have pulled up their socks quite considerably in the last year or two; a lot of their reporting is very highly slanted, but most of them now manage to get at least some of their facts right.

Lately, the only real howlers that I have noted have come from the non-professionals, from people who have visited East Berlin or the Democratic Republic on holidays and business. I regret to say that my latest specimen is a Presbyterian Minister, Dr Ian Fraser of St John's Presbyterian Church in the charmingly named town of Papatoetoe in North Island, New Zealand.

On October 7th this year, Dr Fraser addressed the Rotary Club of Whangarei on the subject of his recent trip to Europe, and here is an excerpt from his address, as reported in "The Northern Advocate", a Whangarei daily newspaper:

"Poverty: During the time he was in East Germany and Poland he saw no one smartly dressed. Many wore clothes which New Zealanders would expect to wear while digging in the garden.

"He saw only two women with high-heeled shoes, and only four wearing hats.

"He saw only one threadbare carpet in the apartments he visited. The rest had bare floors...

"Controls: Dr Fraser quoted such things as the hospitals being locked, both against entry and against egress..."

These few sentences are so odd that it is a little difficult to know where to begin in commenting on them. Let us begin with the first paragraph, which is easiest: no one smart, gardening clothes. This is a matter of taste: clothing is admittedly not of the very best quality in Democratic Germany, but if Dr Fraser saw nobody smartly dressed, then he must have made a big effort. And since we are dealing with a clergyman he will not mind my drawing his attention to Matthew vi. 28: the lilies of the field, he will recall, toil not, neither do they spin, so they have plenty of time to be smart.

But let us hurry on to the second paragraph. Suppressing our natural desire to ask what the reverend gentleman was doing looking at ladies' legs while he counted the high heels, we can only report on our own bit of Mass Observation on the subject: I have just interrupted my writing for five minutes, and stood on the balcony of my office in the Friedrichstrasse in East Berlin, making a spot check. Twenty-three ladies went past: ten of them were wearing "sensible" low-heeled shoes, four were wearing medium heels, and the other nine had shoes which to my untrained eye appeared to fall within the classification "high".

At this rate, high heels went past my office at the rate of almost two per minute: which would mean that to see two pairs of high heels, the worthy Dr Fraser must have spent just over one minute in East Germany. The remark about the hats puzzles me: I have never before heard of anyone equating the incidence of ladies' hats with the standard of living.

Now on to paragraph three, the one about the carpets. This is just so ludicrous that I cannot imagine where Dr Fraser was. In Democratic Germany, carpets are plentiful and relatively cheap: I have been in hundreds of homes here of all sorts and conditions, and I cannot recall one which has no carpets. I would earnestly urge Dr Fraser to recall the Ninth Commandment. If he does not remember it he can look it up.

We are nearly finished now: the only thing that remains to be sorted out is the question of the locked hospitals. In the course of last year a total of some 1,400,000 patients were given hospital treatment in Democratic Germany: how on earth they ever got in to the hospitals, or out again once they were in, I have been unable to discover.

And that, I think, is enough to say about the Strange Case of the Presbyterian Pastor of Papatoetoe. I should like to thank the New Zealand reader who drew my attention to this odd concoction: clippings reporting similar astounding discoveries in Democratic Germany are always welcome, but please remember to tell us the full name of the newspaper and the date of issue.

* * *

I should really be hardened against surprise at almost anything which happens in West Germany: but every now and then something comes along which takes even my breath away.

But let us start at the beginning. As many readers will know, German university students in earlier times engaged in a peculiarly brutal form of duelling called the "Mensur". This is not a sport like fencing, but an odd sadistic-masochistic ritual in which two students dress up in padded clothing, and then hack at each other's faces with sabres. The aim of the operation is not to defeat the other man, but to get one's cheeks slashed into ribbons. The scars are carefully preserved, and for ever after this serves as an outward and visible sign that one has attended university.

This primitive "caste sign" has for generations been revered by the officers, the judges, the lawyers and so on who ruled the Kaiser's Germany, who ruled Hitler's Germany, and who today rule Adenauer's Germany.

After the war, these brutal and exhibitionist duels were banned by all German universities, as a part of the bad old Germany which everybody thought was being banished for ever.

Some years ago, reactionary students started duelling again, but they had to do it on the quiet. This did not satisfy them, and they protested in the West German courts against the ban. And here comes the smash finish to this story: on October 24th the West German Administrative Court, the highest court concerned in the case, ruled that the ban imposed by West German universities on this bloody butchery is illegal. The reason given by the court is breath-taking: the ban offends against the constitutional right of free development of the personality!

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